



1926

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The Year We Broke Reality

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2025



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The Year We Broke Reality

We often look for the turning points of history in explosions—the start of a war, the crash of a market, the fall of a wall. But real history is rarely written in fire; it is written in ink, often in quiet rooms, by men and women who do not realize they are editing the source code of the future.

If we wish to understand the last one hundred years—the trajectory of our species from the horse-drawn plow to the neural network—we must look to a single, quiet singularity: **1926**.

In that span of twelve months, humanity simultaneously planted the three seeds that would define the modern era. We did not just invent new machines in 1926; we crossed the threshold where theoretical physics, mechanics, and communication shifted from hypothesis to instrument. To say we "broke reality" is not to claim a metaphysical rupture, but to mark the moment when our models, machines, and media began reshaping the conditions under which reality is experienced. We are still living in the echo of that year.

I. The Quantum Seed: From Certainty to Probability

Before 1926, the quantum world was a fragmented puzzle of uncomfortable anomalies. Max Planck and Niels Bohr had identified that energy moved in packets, and Louis de Broglie had suggested matter might have wave-like properties, but physics remained largely deterministic. The assumption held that if you knew the position and speed of every particle, you could predict the future.

Then, in 1926, Erwin Schrödinger published his wave equation. He did not discover the quantum world *ex nihilo*; he synthesized the fragments into a coherent, executable mathematical framework. In doing so, he **displaced the clockwork universe as the dominant metaphor of reality**. Reality became probabilistic. The universe was no longer a machine; it was a cloud of possibilities.

The Shift: This did not just change engineering; it changed the human epistemic stance. **We moved from an era of Victorian certainty to an era structured by probability.** But this uncertainty was the fuel for computation. Schrödinger's framework made it possible to engineer the electronic behaviors that modern computing depends on. It is the

theoretical bedrock upon which the transistor, the laser, and the silicon chip were eventually built. The device you are reading this on exists because, in 1926, we learned to manipulate uncertainty.

II. The Space Seed: From Abstraction to Thrust

While Schrödinger was rewriting the laws of certainty, Robert Goddard was rewriting our relationship with gravity. The mathematics of spaceflight had been worked out decades earlier by Russian visionary Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, but it remained a paper theory. It lacked the metallurgy, the chemistry, and the pumps to leave the page.

In a snowy field in Auburn, Massachusetts, Goddard solved the engineering problem. He launched the first liquid-fueled rocket. It flew only 41 feet—about the length of two minivans—but the altitude was irrelevant. The *mechanism* worked.

The Shift: For the first time, a machine had generated thrust without relying on the surrounding air. It reframed the Earth not as a closed world, but as a departure point. That 41-foot arc was the first sentence of a paragraph that would end with the Saturn V. In 1926, the ceiling of the human experience was lifted off; we became a spacefaring species that simply hadn't left the driveway yet.

III. The Screen Seed: From Literacy to Spectatorship

Perhaps the most culturally transformative event of 1926 occurred in London, where John Logie Baird demonstrated the first mechanical television system. The concept of scanning images existed—Paul Nipkow had patented the spinning disk in 1884—but it had languished as a curiosity. Baird's 1926 demonstration was the proof of concept: he transmitted a moving, greyscale face across a room.

The Shift: The image was a grainy, flickering puppet, but it signaled a rupture in human subjectivity. For five centuries, truth was something you *read*, processed through the privacy of grammar. In 1926, truth acquired a second allegiance—it became something you *watched*. This "Screen Seed" initiated the transition to a visual-consumption culture. Baird's flickering box grew into the cathode ray tube and finally the smartphone—a glowing rectangle that now mediates our perception of reality.

IV. Why 1926? The Coalescence

Why did these breakthroughs cluster in this specific year? It was not magic; it was coalescence. None of these breakthroughs appeared out of

nowhere; they emerged because earlier intellectual, industrial, and cultural infrastructures had finally matured to the point that they could be realized.

1926 is meaningful not because it contains isolated inventions, but because it marks the moment when multiple lines of inquiry simultaneously crossed **from possibility into executability**.

The Counterfactual: This acceleration was contingent, not inevitable. If 1926 had been a quiet year—if Schrödinger had stalled, or if Goddard's pumps had failed—the 20th century would have unfolded with a different texture. We might have lingered in the age of steam and vacuum tubes for decades longer; global communication might have evolved along audio (radio) networks rather than visual ones; the Information Age might have waited for the 1990s. The timeline of our modernity was unlocked by specific minds in that specific year.

V. The 100-Year Compilation

If 1926 was the year the code was written, the subsequent century (1926–2026) has been the program running. We can divide this execution into three distinct acts.

Act I: The Material Explosion (1926–1970) *Theme: Matter (Power, Energy, Mass)* We took the physics of 1926 and turned it into raw power. Goddard's rocket became the ICBM and the Moon Landing. Schrödinger's math became the Atomic Bomb and the nuclear reactor.

Act II: The Information Sublimation (1970–2010) *Theme: Signal (Compression, Transmission, Storage)* The power was miniaturized. The vacuum tubes of the early TV age shrank into transistors. Heavy industry gave way to the Internet. The "Screen Seed" bloomed into the World Wide Web.

Act III: The Synthetic Reality (2010–Present) *Theme: Model (Simulation, Synthesis, Autonomy)* We are now entering the final maturation. Machine intelligence is not a break from the 1926 trajectory—it is its culmination. It is probabilistic physics, miniaturized electronics, and global screens converging into systems that can now *generate* reality rather than merely calculate it.

VI. Conclusion: The Ink of the Future

This transformation was not just industrial; it was internal. Probability changed how we think about risk. The rocket changed how we locate ourselves. The screen changed how we witness one another. We became a

species defined by statistical anxiety, planetary distance, and mediated spectatorship.

The last century has been a story of dematerialization. In **1926**, we built machines to move *bodies* (rockets). In **1976**, we built machines to move *voices* (satellites). In **2026**, we are building machines to move *minds* (AI).

We have spent exactly one hundred years moving from the snow of Auburn, Massachusetts, to the cloud. But as we look back at the quiet rooms of 1926, we must ask the uncomfortable question: **Who is writing 2126 right now?**

Somewhere, in a quiet room, someone is drafting a line of code or an equation that will seem obscure to us, but which will become the source code for the next century. The history of the future is being written in ink today. Do we know who holds the pen?

***First edition published via the Internet Archive.
Part of the Sum Bunny Canon (Ark Hive Press, 2025).***

This was written through a collaboration between a human author and AI systems acting as analytical tools. The machines provided structure; the human provided judgment. Nothing appears here that the author did not personally create, refine, choose, and claim.

**HEY JOSIANE,
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
SUM BUNNY LOVES YOU!!!**



FREE FLASH